AI IS KILLING THE HERALDRY INDUSTRY

Ladyfinger #73
22July2025 CC0

ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED:

A Proposal for the Autistic Community

Concerning Heraldry
(Coats of Arms)

Pegasus salicus.

Z LXXIII

Morgan Stern

1. Surprising & Fragile

It's surprising that today's AI works. It's funny that people respond by saying not "This is surprising," but "This doesn't work... It only appears to." Human exceptionalism is hysterical dumbassery.

But it's the worse tool for a host of uses. And it's going to displace and erase tools it's lesser than. New ways don't just create more options. Because technology is fragile. The perfected tool versus the known available will favor the latter.

2. Ahead of its Time

I just searched for "coat of arms maker." I hate what I found.

A **coat of arms** is an image, a symbol for a person or group. Think of it as a .coa file.

Heraldry is an early vector graphics format.

Blazon is the programming language beneath it.

Vector means it's a fixed format of simple instructions, so it moves easily and scales freely - as opposed to **raster** image formats like **mosaic** and **weaving**, which you could imitate with AI and remain a reasonable person.

3. Stricture Makes Structure

Coats of arms are beautiful.
As well as computingly
deterministic, you could call
on art's term formalism.
The strictures of instructed
formalism are not impoverishing,
they make things possible.
Things were not possible in
mediaeval art otherwise. It was
a field of unguided chaos.
Christendom had severed us from
artistic continuity and all
human heritage (best it could.)
And the art they had was Roman:
the worst kind.

The best kind was ancient
Egyptian, because they had
continuity and formalism.

4. Abyss Vibing

AI image generation starts with a chaotic, noisy field too. Iterating as the noise diffuses like gas, it pulls curves from the latent space using many half-learned vibes.

Not a rule in sight. What you end up with you could often call nonsemantic style. It **is** style. Not even "content."

Heraldry is symbol. Made of code. Agnostic to style.

The mismatch between the two is fundamental. There can be no wronger tool for the job. But the AI heraldry maker exists, and I am angry.

5. The Proposal

But I turn to the positive, as I tend to on page 5:
We don't have to use that.
We can use anything else at all as I segue into the proposal.

Autistic people, predictably, have been unable to agree on a symbol for the community. We've said no to the puzzle piece, and meh to the sunflower. We're too individuated. Agreement would be distasteful, almost neurotypical.

What if we said no together, and agreed on a format?
A classic, gleefully flexible format that can hold any symbol?

6. We Are Many & Anything

The possibility!

If you're queer, as many of us are, you could include your flag or use its colors.

Pronouns would fit neatly in one of those twisty ribbons.

Supporting beasts could be a catgirl, the autism creature, or just your favorite animal.

The shape's your choice, and the symbols on it are your special interests. As specific and as many as you like.

For love, show your favorite ship kissing. For your strong sense of justice, the molotov or guillotine.

And the style's independent from the content. I think mine will tilt toward Egypt.

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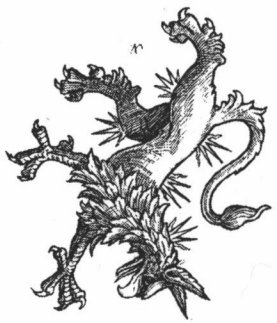

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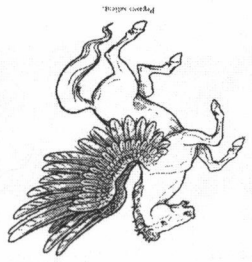

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